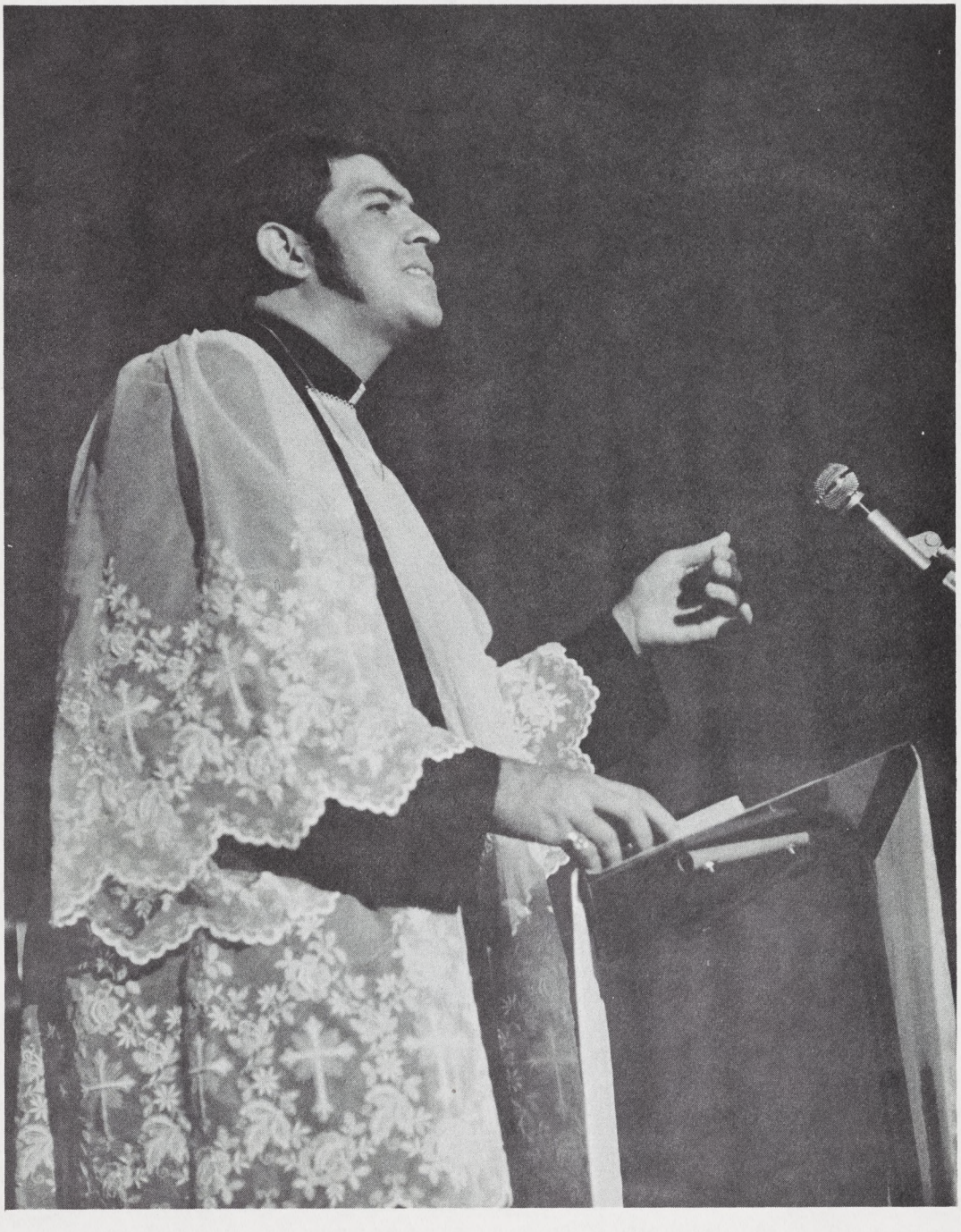
INTRODUCING

REV. TROY D. PERRY

AND

THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES



PREPARED BY: 'Bo' Siewert, Editor, MCC News

INTRODUCING
THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

DOCTRINE:

Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and is the Religion set forth in the Scriptures. The Old Testament foretells Him, the New Testament presents Him and the Christian Church proclaims Him in every age and in every land.

The UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES, founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our Faith is based upon the principles outlined in the Apostolic Creeds...

A. WE BELIEVE:

1. In one God, omnipotent, omipresent, He being the Creator of all life which has spirituality, the prime mover and Spirit of the Universe.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, containing God's revelation of Himself to mankind through the law and the Prophets, and finally, completely, and ultimately through His presence on earth in the being of His Son, Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus...the Christ...historically recorded as dwelling in Asia Minor some 2,000 years before this writing, is God's most divine Son, as well as being the son of man, born of woman. And that by total subservience to God, the Father, has demonstrated once and forever that all men are likewise children of God, being spiritually made in His image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is the working arm of God, available to, and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in His keeping. That the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of God's love and interest in all men, and given the opportunity, making his presence felt in their lives.

B. WE FURTHER BELIEVE THAT:

1. All men are justified to God through Faith. Although good works are commendable in the sight of the Lord, only through Faith can we hope to attain His presence.

2. Further, we are saved from loneliness, despair, and degradation through God's gift of grace, as witnessed by our Master's words when He said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Such grace is not earned but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the Fellowship of the Faithful to a life of prayer, seeking genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts and deeds.

To this end, we enjoin the brethren assembled together to express through Christian witness, a personal commitment to lead Godly and Christ-like lives, approaching His throne in an attitude of prayer, seeking regeneration and rebirth.

The Church shall serve as the vehicle for bringing men to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, intrepretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

The objective of this Fellowship shall be:

A. To bind together Churches for the purpose of sharing in the Worship of God in the Congregational Christian tradition, and to make His will dominant in the lives of men, individually and collectively, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

B. To set up bodies for instruction in the science and philosophy of theology and kindred subjects for the propagation of the teachings and philosophy of the Christian Faith, as accepted by the General Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

C. To instruct and indoctrinate those who offer themselves into the teachings and philosophy as received by this body.

D. To do all things that are compatible with the work and labor of a religious body.

MEMBERSHIP:

Any person desiring to become a member of any Church which is a member of the Fellowship, shall submit his application to the Clerk and the Board of Directors of such Church. Upon approval of such Board he shall be admitted to membership, after affirmation of Faith Baptism, or by letter of transfer from any other local Church body.

Any member who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, or expressed interest and loyalty during the period of one calendar year, shall be placed on an inactive members list. At that time the Board of Directors of his local Church shall notify the member in writing that he has been placed on such list. After notification, if the member has not expressed further interest or loyalty for a period of one year immediately following, the Board of Directors of his local Church shall have the authority, in their discretion, to drop any such member from the Church rolls, may be restored to regular standing by vote of the Board of Directors of his local Church, without a public reception into membership.

FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH:

A local Church body may, if it desires, accept into the Church persons who, for one reason or another, feel that they cannot become regular members of the Church, but who support the goals of the Church and want to be part of the work of the Church. Such persons shall be designated as "Friends of the Church." Friends may serve on appointed committees, and may participate in all activities of the Church. Friends may not, however, serve on the Board of Directors, or the Board of Deacons, and may not vote at congregational meetings. Friends shall not be considered in determining the number of Lay Delegates which a local Church body may send to meetings of the General Conference of the Fellowship.

The Pastor Speaks

A LETTER FROM A HOMOSEXUAL TO THE CHURCH

I am not a creature from the outer darkness, as you seem to believe. I am a homosexual and like most of the members of your Churches, a man of flesh and blood. I am a member of the Church...and an intregal part of its people!

I have a few things to say. Because I am not a diplomat, I do not have to mince words, nor do I have to please you or even persuade you. I owe you very little. You did not create this body; you do not live in it; you do not have to defend it when individuals try to destroy it, and I will not let you tell me what I can do with it!

Because of my sexual orientation, you try to condemn me. For two thousand years I have watched you try to destroy my brothers and sisters. Many homosexuals have had trials of "cruel mocking and scorching, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sown asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; people of whom the world was not worthy."

You have watched as we were placed on the rack, thrown to the flames, banished from the midst of society, and you have never said a word! Your heart cried out when after almost four hundred years, you saw the plight of the black people in this country. When the water hoses, cattle prongs, and dogs were used on black men, women and children, a muffled scream escaped your throats. At once your blind eyes opened to some of the social injustices around you. You marched with Dr. Martin Luther King in Birmingham, Washington D. C., Selma and then that day in Memphis. That day in Memphis your eyes became a fountain of tears. The mighty had fallen and you wept!

Sometimes you still weep. For the American Indians, for the Mexican Americans, and for the lonely child-soldiers...on both sides, that are dying in a dirty little war in Viet Nam.

But what of the homosexuals? Did you weep when one was beaten to death by the Police in Los Angeles? When another was shot in the back and killed in a park in Berkeley? And another imprisoned for life in Florida? Does it upset you that there are riots in New York...and that homosexuals demonstrating for their rights in California are arrested for demanding their civil rights? If it does, you have not shown it. Jesus said, " I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or hot; I would thou went cold or hot. So then because thou are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will sprew thee out of my mouth."

Oh! Church, if only you would keep the teachings that were delivered to you..."Love the Lord thy God with all your heart, mind, strength, and your neighbor as yourself."...but you haven't You have rejected the homosexual...and now...for the most part he has rejected you!

I am thankful that I still have a God. You cannot take Him away from me! He is the Author and Finisher of my Faith. His name is spelled LOVE ! L O V E !!!

Church...If you will not let me worship Him in your Temples; I will worship Him in the Cathedral of my heart, and build for Him a Temple where others can worship with me.

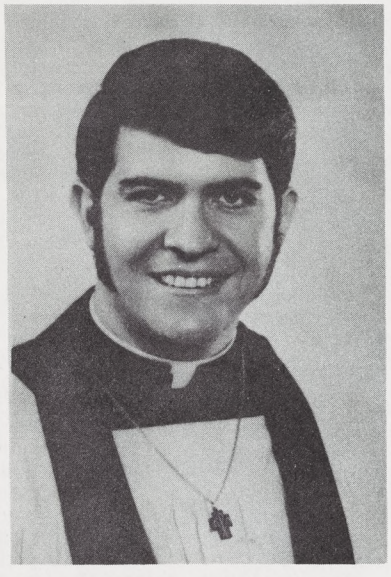
Church...it is you that left me, not me who has left you. You would try to make me believe that He does not care for me, but I know; "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me!"

Oh! Bride of Christ! I pray that you will wake up and call ALL of your CHILDREN back to your bosom and soul. Back home to family and friends and loved ones. Church, only you can make that possible!

Troy D. Perry

There must be a reason
Californians have watched this man.

Meet Reverend Perry



Reverend Troy D. Perry was born on July 27th, 1940. He was the first of five sons born to Troy Perry, Sr. and Edith Allen Perry of Tallahassee, Florida.

LICENSED MINISTER AT 15

Reverend Perry attended Grammer and High School in the public school systems of Florida and Alabama. He first felt a call to the ministry at the age of thirteen and was licensed to preach when only fifteen years old. At this time Reverend Perry was involved in the ministry of the Southern Baptist and Penticostal Denominations.

FATHER WHEN 20

In 1958 Troy Perry was married in Mobile Alabama and that same year he traveled with his wife to Summit, Illinois where he attended a small Penticostal Bible College. After attending this school for one year Rev. and Mrs. Perry moved to Lake Alford, Florida, where he pastored. The first of two sons was born here in 1960.

THE WEST CALLS

Reverend Perry pastored one year in Florida before going north to Chicago to attend one semester at Bible College. In 1962 he and his family moved west to Southern California to live. After settling in California Reverend Perry was assigned to pastor the Church of God of Prophecy in Santa Ana.

LEAVES CHURCH

When only twenty-three, while pastoring the church in Santa Ana Reverend Perry "came to terms" with his homosexuality, at this point he and his wife separated and he left the church.

UNCLE SAM ENTERS

The draft called his number and Reverend Perry served in the US Army for 2 years, during 1965 - 1967, while stationed in Germany he was a part-time pastor at a Pentecostal Church for servicemen. He returned to Los Angeles early in 1968.

GOD CARES

In August of '68 he was with a person that was arrested at one of the local gay bars. This chap had never been arrested before when he was bailed out Troy took him home to counsel him. The man wept and said "No one cares for us homosexuals"- Troy tried to calm him, saying, "God cares". "No", the chap cried "not even God cares". He went on to say that in his church he was told he could not be a church member and also be a homosexual. Troy prayed "God when do you want me to start a church?"

Metropolitan Community Church was founded by Reverend Troy D. Perry on October 16, 1968.

Homosexuals in Los Angeles, Like Many Elsewhere, Want Religion and Establish Their Own Church

By EDWARD B. FISKE
Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES — The Rev. Troy D. Perry burst forward from his seat to a makeshift pulpit shouting, "If you love the Lord this morning, say 'Amen'." With one voice, the congregation of more than 400 persons roared back its response.

Such is the style of worship every Sunday at the nondenominational Metropolitan Community Church, a style that resembles that of just about any Protestant church with a revivalist flavor.

The Metropolitan Community Church is no ordinary church however. It is the first congregation in the country to identify itself openly as a church for male and female homosexuals.

Its founding 16 months ago reflects both the growing willingness of American homosexuals to assert themselves as a distinct minority group and the emergence of a more liberal attitude toward homosexuals among religious bodies.

In recent months, regional and national church bodies, especially those connected with the United Church of Christ, have begun to call for more dialogue between homosexual relations between consenting adults.

In 1964, following a police raid on a dance, the Council on Religion and the Homophile was formed in San Francisco to work in this field. About half a dozen such groups now exist in other cities.

In addition, officials have estimated that across the country there are as many as 100 to 200 churches that are quietly known as congenial to homosexuals. One small denomination is also reported to have an exclusively homosexual clergy and a predominantly homosexual membership.

Mr. Perry is a dark-haired, 29-year-old preacher with a charismatic manner, a Pentacostalist theological orientation and no compunction at all about admitting that he is an active homosexual.

He convened the first service in his home in October, 1968, with nine friends and three persons drawn by an advertisement in a local homosexual newspaper. Since then the congregation has grown to 348 members, most of whom are in their mid-20's to mid-40's.

Seventy per cent of the members are male homosexuals, including a number of clergymen. Fifteen per cent are lesbians. The rest are relatives of members or other "straight" persons, who, in Mr. Perry's words, "like the friendly atmosphere around here."

Mr. Perry, who was forced out of the Church of God of Prophecy, a Pentacostalist group with headquarters in Cleveland, Tenn., because of his homosexuality, attributes the rapid increase in membership to at least two factors.

One is the reluctance of most mainline congregations to integrate known homosexuals fully into their programs, with the corollary attitude of most clergymen that their task is to persuade the homosexual to alter his behavior rather than to come to terms with it as part of his condition.

The second factor is the need of homosexuals to have places where they can relate to each other in a congenial and low-pressure social setting.

"In the gay bars the emphasis is too much on sex," said Fred Conwell, a 32-year-old writer and a church member from Dayton, Ohio. "There aren't many places like this, where to be friendly to someone doesn't mean you're trying to go to bed with him."

The 17-room parsonage of the Metropolitan Community Church is thus the center of a large program of activities ranging from job counseling and alcoholism groups to a forthcoming Valentine's Day dance and well-attended coffee hours before church on Sundays.

Services are held in the 385-seat Encore Theater, a Hollywood movie house that donates its facilities. But the congregation has outgrown this facility and is now seeking to purchase a church building. Plans are also under way to establish related congregations in San Francisco, San Diego, Phoenix, Ariz., and nearby Orange County.

Members of the congregation reject the idea that homosexuality, per se, is either sinful or sick. Rather, they argue that it is a condition that offers the same possibilities for love or sin as heterosexuality.

This attitude is in sharp contrast to the long-standing Jewish and Christian teaching that homesexuality is a sinful perversion of the natural order created by God. This is still the unquestioned attitude of the overwhelming majority of churchgoers.

Recently, however, some church leaders have begun to reconsider the rigidity of this position.

At the social level, some Protestant church leaders and some Roman Catholic priests, acting unofficially, have begun to argue that holding to a heterosexual ideal is no excuse for the ostracism that church and society as a whole have imposed on homosexuals.

Some theologians have also gone beyond the civil liberties area to question whether the traditional condemnation of homosexuality is compatible with the love ethic of Jesus. One argument is that the harshness of the past position was largely the result of historical circumstances, such as the desire of the ancient Hebrews to disassociate themselves from the Canaanites, who made homosexual acts part of their polytheistic worship.

The controversial New Cathechism of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands asserted that homosexuality is morally neutral. Among the individuals who have taken this position is Norman Pittenger, a prominent Anglican, who wrote that homosexual acts are "good" acts "insofar as they contribute to the movement of the persons toward mutual fulfillment and fulfillment in mutuality, with all the accompanying characteristics of love."

But the vast majority of thinkers, especially Catholics and conservative Protestants, have remained firm in rejecting such thinking. Carl F. H. Henry, an American evangelical leader, for instance, recently called for a "compassionate" view of homosexuals but declared that acceptance of their condition as beyond their control would "strip all sexual behavior of moral significance."

Mr. Perry acknowledges that tolerance toward homosexuality raises new and complex ethical problems, including those associated with "marriages" between homosexual couples.

The preacher has officiated at 18 such weddings, eight of them involving lesbians. He uses the regular marriage rite of the Episcopal Church, substituting words such as "spouse" for "husband" or "wife."

He encourages marriages on the ground that society, by its laws and practice on matters such as the renting of housing, keeps homosexuals in an insecure and unhealthy situation. "I am a great believer in homosexuals settling down like anyone else," he said.

Most clergymen of all faiths would still reject the idea of homosexual marriages, however, and even some involved in work with homosexuals prefer to devise means of "blessing" a relationship rather than performing a "wedding."

Mr. Perry himself was married to a woman at the age of 19 and fathered two children. When his homosexual tendencies "came out" at the age of 23, he said, a divorce followed. He now lives with a 21-year-old college student, whom he has not yet "married."

Many homosexuals oppose the idea of a strictly homosexual church. The Rev. Harvey Beach, a 34-year-old Methodist clergyman in Chicago who was forced out of the ministry because of his homosexuality, declared in an interview that such a congregation in his area would "isolate homosexuals who attended even more than they are now."

But members of the Metropolitan Community Church argue that they must stand, as a judgment on the church in the same way that other movements, such as Christian Science, have called attention to the failure of mainline churches to express all elements of the Christian faith.

"The churches have closed their doors on a whole group of people," said the Rev. Richard Ploen, one of two unpaid assistant pastors of the church. "That's the only reason we exist."

A Church for Homosexuals

BY JOHN DART
Times Religion Writer

While music played in the background, parishioners took their seats and passed hymn books down the rows, a layman started the worship service by reading from the 37th Psalm.

". . .Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off . . .

"The meek shall inherit the earth . . ."

The service that followed was not too different from many Protestant services.

But the psalm's prophecy that "the meek shall inherit the earth" undoubtedly has special meaning for this unusual congregation.

The churchgoers that filled the 385-seat Encore Theater on a recent Sunday morning were nearly all males, most of them young.

The church in Hollywood is believed to be the first one in the country to have a homosexual pastor, a predominantly homosexual congregation and to identify itself unabashedly as a church for homosexuals.

Formed a little more than a year ago, the Metropolitan Community Church has grown to more than 255 members and a prominent role in the increasingly outspoken homosexual community in Los Angeles.

The pastor is 29-year-old Troy Perry, who was minister of fundamentalist churches in Florida and Santa Ana before he faced up to what homosexuals sometimes call their "sexual orientation."

Some young women attend the services. Perry estimates that the membership is 70% male homosexuals, 15% female homesexuals, or lesbians, and 15% heterosexuals, some of whom are relatives of members and "some who just like our kind of service."

Although most of the members are not ashamed of their homosexuality, many fear public disclosure—sometimes because it could cause them to be discharged from their jobs.

At several points during the service Pastor Perry gently ribs members for their skittishness and secrecy. Complaining that deacons of the church were having trouble contacting parishioners, the young pastor drew laughs from the pews when he added: "This time, give us your real name and address."

Assistant Minister

After the psalm reading and a hymn, an assistant minister briefly addressed the congregation. "We hope we are a friendly church," he said. Like ministers in churches around the country that Sunday morning, he urged the parishioners to "make it a point to speak to other people here today."

Another hymn, a scripture reading, then another assistant minister asked if there were any special prayer requests. Many hands went up, but only one was acknowledged. "Brother Jack . . . is facing surgery and would like our prayers," said a man in the front row.

But another worshiper, unacknowledged, weeping and with shaking voice, began thanking God for the growth of the church, for a growing public understanding of homosexuals and the assurance he felt that Jesus loved him, too. The impromptu, emotional testimony was not unlike the kind that can be heard in some Bible Belt churches.

Bounces From Seat

After the prayers were said. Pastor Perry bounced from his seat near the temporary altar, took three swift steps to the pulpit, and said loudly in enthusiastic Southern evangelist style:

"If you love the Lord this morning, say, 'Amen!'"

"Amen!" came the deep-throated response from the rows of theater seats.

His Southern upbringing and previous association with the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) is reflected in his pulpit style.

For the Sunday services, however, Perry wears a priest's cassock and vestments. "Catholics and men from the liturgical churches like Lutheran and Episcopal can relate better to someone who looks a little like a priest," he explained.

A calmer style of ministry comes from Metropolitan Community Church's two part-time clergymen, one a former United Church of Christ pastor in the Midwest and the other an ex-Presbyterian minister and missionary. Both prefer to keep their names out of print because they work fulltime outside the church.

Characteristics of a liberal, activist church are assumed when it discusses "straight" society's discrimination against the "silent minority" of homosexuals.

Urging his churchgoers to attend a rally that afternoon to protest the state law banning private homosexual acts between consenting adults, Perry reiterated: "The church does not stand for adults having sexual affairs with minors, in public or forcing themselves on others." (Applause from the pews.)

Perry is president of the Western Homophile Conference ("homophile" literally means anyone sympathetic to homosexuals though the term is often used as a euphemism for homosexual), chairman of the Los Angeles Committee for Homosexual Law Reform and a board member of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual.

Later Council

The latter council, formed in several major cities in the 1960s, includes many heterosexual clergy from mainline denominations.

Criticism of church appeals for more compassionate views of homosexuals was made recently by a leading conservative churchman, Dr. Carl F. H. Henry of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Some sympathizers seem to be more compassionate than Jesus "toward moral evils," said Dr. Henry.

"In the name of Christian love we hear louder and louder pleas for a new attitude toward divorce and remarriage, toward adultery, toward premarital intercourse and toward homosexuality."

Contributor to "The Gay World and Theology," a book to be published by the Presbyterian-run Westminster Press next spring, Dr. Henry said the Christian community is not called "to dignify homosexuality as a way of life equivalent to heterosexuality."

A minister of a Hollywood church said he was once asked by a homosexual if his friends could come to the church, and the minister replied that anyone is welcome to come to his church. Asked if the group could meet there as a homosexual group, the minister said no.

The same clergyman, while somewhat sympathetic to the homosexuals' plight, said he believes that young men can be and are led into a life of homosexuality by homosexuals looking for new lovers.

Please Turn

Pastor Perry and a number of other outspoken homosexuals, however, believe that psychology and their own experiences indicate a person's sexual orientation is largely determined in his early years of life. Then, they say, it's only a matter of time before the "coming out" of the homosexual, if that's the orientation.

Though he had his first homosexual experience at age 9, Perry said he dated girls in his teens, married at age 19, and later had a child.

"My wife had some knowledge of my homosexuality and she wanted us to stay together anyway," said Perry, "but I felt I was living a lie as far as my church's doctrine was concerned.

Perry said his ministry was successful at Santa Ana. The church grew rapidly in membership in the year he was there. But the denomination, which condemned movie-going and jewelry, also excommunicated any minister who indulged in homosexual acts.

His district leader didn't know how to respond when Perry told him about his feelings, the young pastor said. "Laymen who had confessed their homosexual feelings to him were convinced it was the devil, and if you pray hard enough God would remove it," he said.

Started Church

He was soon excommunicated from the church. After working at various jobs and serving a stint in the Army, he started the homosexual church, meeting in various locations around Los Angeles until a motion picture theater in Hollywood was donated for use on Sunday mornings.

Of biblical strictures against homosexuality, Perry feels the interpretations of the past have been wrong or too literal.

"In Leviticus it says if a man lies with a man, both should be stoned," he said. "But in the same book in the Bible it says it's wrong for a woman to wear a scarlet dress or for a person to eat shrimp."

The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians, 6th chapter, lists the effeminate or homosexuals (depending on the translation) among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. "The Greek word can mean several things, but if you're going to be that literal you could find the wearing of long hair by men and wearing of gold and pearls by women condemned in the New Testament," he said.

Sodom, from which the term sodomy was derived, was destroyed, according to the Bible, "not for its homosexuality but because they couldn't find 20 righteous men in the city," said Perry.

Making a distinction between sexual lust and sexual love, Perry said Paul wrote in Romans that God gave up some men to dishonorable passions because they worshiped animals and men rather than God. As for the passage about "men giving up their natural relations with women," Perry countered: "How could the homosexuals give up something they never had?"

To say Metropolitan Community Church is one church that has no arguments over sex, and what is appropriate for a church, would be wrong. The current MCC bulletin contains ads from "a private club for groovy guys," a bar and an erotic homosexuals publishing house, but the church bulletin's editors concede there is ongoing discussion of whether it is proper or not for a church publication.

The church has a variety of activities and services besides the worship services. They include:

—Prayer meetings and Bible classes.

—An "Alcoholics Together" group.

—A class for the deaf (Ten deaf persons attended the recent Sunday's service with an assistant minister interpreting what was said.)

—Marriage ceremonies, though they are not legally binding. ("Couples have to be together six months before I'll marry them.")

--A "ladies auxiliary," designed partly to counsel wives, mothers or sisters of homosexuals.

—A telephone hot line and counseling service for homosexuals.

"The biggest practical need we serve is that of understanding and giving the homosexual a sense of belonging," Perry said.

"Most churches in America don't openly invite homosexuals as homosexuals to come and worship God," he said.

"They feel, if anything, they have to change the person and convert him from his homosexuality to make him a fit member for their church—and that's just impossible," he declared.

Los Angeles Times
Mon., Dec. 8, 1969—

Homosexuals Get ACLU Aid in Fight for Parade Permit

BY PAUL HOUSTON
Times Staff Writer

The American Civil Liberties Union Friday went to the aid of homosexuals who are protesting conditions placed on a parade permit by the Police Commission.

"These ridiculous conditions"—mainly purchase of a $1 million liability insurance policy and payment of a $1,500 fee for police services—"make it impossible to hold a parade," said ACLU attorney Herbert Selwyn.

"They violate these law-abiding citizens' right to peacefully assemble," he added.

Selwyn said the permit applicant, the homosexually oriented Metropolitan Community Church, 1149½ N. Virgil Ave., will request reconsideration by the commission and then go to court, if necessary.

The parade sponsor, an organization called Christopher Street West, an amalgram of 34 homosexual and sexual freedom groups in Los Angeles County and the Bay Area, seeks to hold a parade with costumes and an "empress" float down Hollywood Blvd. Sunday night, June 28.

"It would be a joyous affirmation of self-respect," said Morris Kight, founder of the Los Angeles Gay Liberation Front.

"We want to peacefully honor the impressive show of strength made by rioting homosexuals on Christopher St. in Greenwich Village last year," he said. "And we want to simply affirm the fact that Hollywood is a homosexual ghetto with many of the businesses supported by us."

The Police Commission voted 4 to 1 to place the conditions on the parade permit after Commissioner Michael Kohn cited the potential for violent reaction from bystanders, and Chief Edward M. Davis opposed the parade altogether.

Davis told the commission that as long as felony laws against oral copulation and sodomy are on the books, "We would be ill-advised to discommode the people to have a

PARADE PERMIT

Continued

burglars' or robbers' parade or homosexuals' parade from a legal standpoint."

Kight responded later, "This is a colossal piece of ignorance that goes to the root of misunderstanding in the community. Nearly all homosexuals are house-owning, law-abiding people who disobey the law only in their choice of sexual outlets. Heterosexuals violate these same archaic, puritanical laws, which have nothing to do with 1970."

It was the second time the commission had used recently granted powers to require applicants for parades or shows to buy insurance policies and pay for city services when trouble was anticipated.

The powers were granted over ACLU objections by the City Council in the wake of the disturbance-plagued rock music festival at Devonshire Downs in Northridge last June.

The sponsor of rock concerts at the Olympic Auditorium in May was required to pay the city $3,500 a performance for security guards. At one concert, singer Little Richard and others were injured when the stage collapsed under the weight of fans who crowded onto it.

No insurance policy was required for the show's sponsor because the event was held in a private arena.

No conditions were placed on other parade permits issued Tuesday to the Valley Vista Junior Women's Club, Woodland Hills Chamber of Commerce, El Sereno Chamber of Commerce, Palisades Americanism Parade Assn., Granada Hills Junior Woman's Club and the city Recreation and Parks Department.

A $1 million policy insuring the city against liability for property damage or personal injury would cost the homosexuals from $1,700 to $4,500, an insurance agent estimated Friday.

"The price is jacked up by the group's notoriety and by the unknown reaction from Hollywood's version of the hard hats," he said.

LOS ANGELES TIMES, June 1970

TIME, JULY 13, 1970

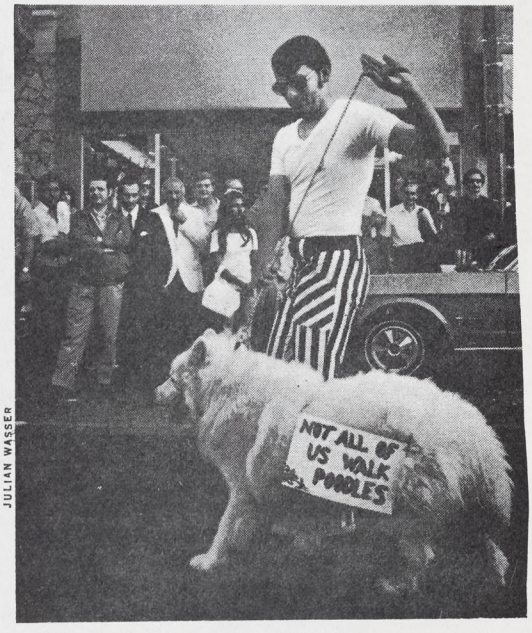
Gay Pride

Homosexuals, as Gore Vidal has noted, are one of the last minorities in the nation about whom it is still safe to make public jokes. That may not last much longer. Increasingly, homosexuals are creating their own public para-institutions, including churches (*see* RELIGION). And with the proliferation of such radical groups as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance, they are taking to the streets.

Hard on the heels of Women's Liberation and the Black Power movement, hundreds of male and female homosexuals in New York and Los Angeles wound up "Gay Pride Week" with parades that displayed, in turn, an angry solidarity and outrageous camp, proving that homosexuals are capable of some assertive wit about themselves and their sexual preferences.

On Hollywood Boulevard, one gay led a fearsome white husky dog that wore a sign: NOT ALL OF US WALK POODLES. Another poster proclaimed: HOMOSEXUALS FOR REAGAN. Marching up Manhattan's Sixth Avenue, the phalanxes chanted: "Two-four-six-eight, gay is just as good as straight!" or "Ho-Ho-Homosexual!" With cause, the homosexuals were protesting police harassment, Mafia control of some gay bars and other injustices. Some sociologists reckon that the nation's homosexual population, open and secret, is about 4,000,000, and so the new aggressiveness has a large potential. One picket sign in the Los Angeles parade sought to point the way: BETTER BLATANT THAN LATENT.

HOMOSEXUAL MARCHER



JULIAN WASSER

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A MAN, A MINISTER... A MINORITY

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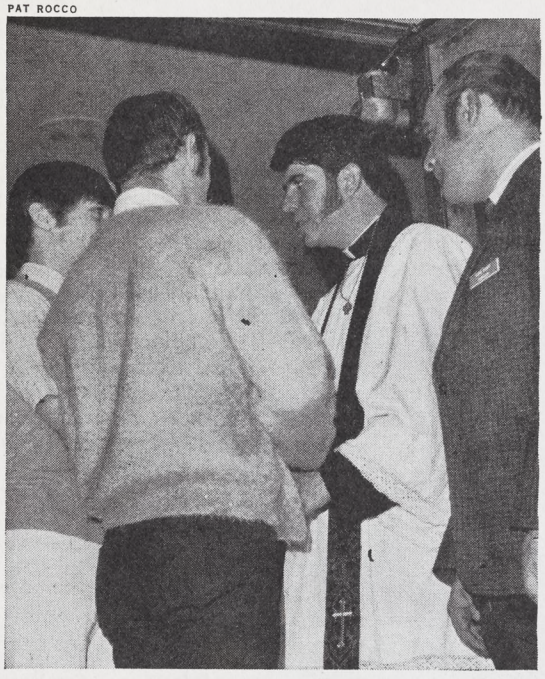
RELIGION

PAT ROCCO



THE REV. TROY PERRY GREETING PARISHIONERS
Not confined to Sunday.

Hope for the Homosexual

On Sunday morning, the movie theater on Melrose Avenue in Hollywood is packed. The front rows are filled with a red-robed choir of men and women. Hymnals are distributed; an organ plays. By Hollywood standards, the congregation is run-of-the-mill: middle-aged businessmen, a few boys in rainbow-hued bell-bottoms, muscular types in T shirts, women in assorted styles of pants or skirts, a few motorcycle boys in mustaches and black leather. Whites, blacks, Orientals, Chicanos. Prayers are read. From a chair at the side, a husky 30-year-old man in vestments abruptly rises, steps swiftly out in front of the makeshift altar, and, flashing a beguiling, boyish smile, booms out: "If you love the Lord this morning, say 'Amen!' " "Amen!" roar the 700 worshipers —nearly all of whom are homosexuals. Another service of the Metropolitan Community Church is under way.

The founder and inspiration of the M.C.C. is the Rev. Troy Perry, a homosexual who admits it without embarrassment or shame. Perry preached his first sermon when he was 13, and became a licensed Baptist minister at 15 (a year later he switched to Pentacostalism because he found its kinetic services more to his liking). Though he had his first homosexual experience at nine, he did not accept his sexual orientation until he was 23. By then he was married, the father of two sons and pastor of the Church of God of Prophecy in Santa Ana, Calif. When he finally faced his problem, the district elder to whom he spoke pronounced him demon-possessed and advised him to pray. "I told him I'd prayed till I was blue in the face, but it didn't do any good," says Perry.

Finding a Calling. Separated from both his wife and his church, he moved to Hollywood after a hitch in the Army. There, one summer night in 1968, Perry bailed a fellow homosexual out of jail and tried to calm him. "It's no use," sobbed the young man. "No one cares for us homosexuals."

"God cares," said Perry.

"No, not even God cares," came the answer. At that moment, Perry found his calling.

His church was launched on a tiny ad in the *Advocate*, a local gay newspaper. Nine friends and three strangers turned up. "It was a mess and a mass," Perry recalls. "But the Lord really moved that day. People were weeping." The church was peripatetic at first, forced to move time after time as landlords discovered the nature of Perry's parishioners and indignantly evicted them. Finally Hollywood's Encore Theater donated its building for Sunday services.

The M.C.C. obviously fulfills a genuine need. With rare exceptions, other denominations either do not want the homosexual or else condemn him. Perry's church does not confine its services to Sunday. It also helps in job placement, offers psychological counseling, discussion and study groups. A 24-hour "hot line" is kept open for any possible emergency. There are even groups to advise "straight" family members who are trying to understand a homophile relative.

After 18 months, Perry's church has earned a considerable degree of public acceptance. Similar congregations exist in Chicago, San Diego and San Francisco. More important has been the effect on Perry's flock. "It's changed my life," says one member, who is now the M.C.C.'s office secretary. "I even got up the courage to tell my mother that I'm homosexual. She confessed that she already knew about it, but she said, 'You're my son, and I love you anyway.' I feel now that God cares about us —that we're his children and that Christ died for us just like he did for everyone else."

The Homosexual Church

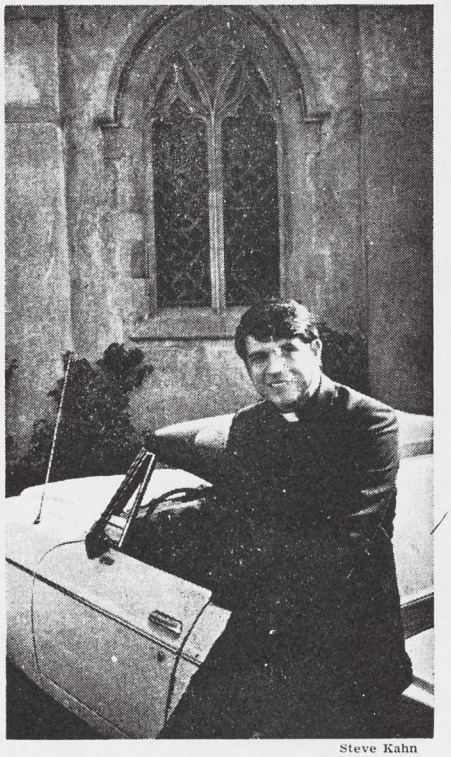
Two years ago this week a newspaper called The Advocate, which circulates primarily in the homosexual community in Los Angeles, carried a small announcement inviting readers to Christian worship services conducted by the Rev. Troy Perry. On the following Sunday, only nine of Perry's friends and three strangers showed up to worship. But despite this rather meager response, Perry, a Pentecostal preacher and an admitted homosexual, remained convinced that "the Lord" wanted him to found a gay church.

Today, Perry is pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church, a 420-member homosexual congregation that holds regular Sunday services in an old theater in Hollywood. And, considerably buoyed by his own organizational success, Perry last week undertook the next logical step: the creation of a national federation of churches for male and female homosexuals, complete with a moderator, elders, missionary branches and even a seminary. (The function of the seminary will be to train clergymen who will concentrate on bringing an evangelical Protestant message to millions of unchurched homosexuals in the U.S.)

Called the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, the nation's newest denomination claims a total membership of 1,000 in San Francisco, San Diego, Phoenix, Chicago and Los Angeles, plus growing mission congregations in a half dozen other cities from Boston to Honolulu. Unlike most churches, the new denomination's officials say, homosexual congregations normally draw up to twice their enrollment to Sunday services. "Our services are identical with Christian services everywhere," says the Rev. Mr. Perry, who is the only officer of the denomination at present willing to have his name publicly identified with the church. But one variation from normal religious practice occurs in Perry's marriage services, which he has so far performed for 36 homosexual couples—eight of them lesbian. "We substitute the word 'spouse' for 'husband' and 'wife'," the pastor explains.*

Suicide Prevention: Like other liberal denominations, the Universal Fellowship stresses service over creed and cult, and members are accepted principally on the basis of their willingness to help the homosexual community. At the mother church in Los Angeles, members provide legal and medical services which, Perry claims, homosexuals have difficulty obtaining from regular agencies. The church has also organized a group-therapy program conducted by a homosexual psychologist, sensitivity training groups run by a graduate theology student, a suicide-prevention referral service, and a special class in sign language for deaf homosexuals.

Not all the church's organizations are limited exclusively to homosexuals. (Some 20 per cent of its congregants are, in fact, heterosexuals.) The church runs a counseling service for mothers who discover that their children have homosexual inclinations and a young people's club that provides religious instruction and social activities for teen-agers, whose fathers or mothers are homosexuals. But the primary purpose of Perry's denomination is to provide dignity, support and old-time Gospel religion to the gay community. "We've got to help homosexuals break away from the myths that many of them entertain about themselves," Perry believes. "Not all homosexuals are witty, brilliant, constantly happy or more artistic than other people. At the same time, we are trying to educate others to see us as people, not as perverts. We accept the terms 'homosexual' and 'gay,' but we regard terms like 'queer,' 'faggot' and 'fairy' with the same loathing that the black person has for 'nigger'."



Steve Kahn

Perry: 'People, not perverts'

Indeed, like all-black churches, Perry's denomination is growing because it caters to Christians whom other churches don't want—or can't accept. Some 40 per cent of his parishioners in Los Angeles were baptized Roman Catholics and another 40 per cent are, like Perry, evangelical Protestants. But all have joined his fold because they desire a conventional religious life—and a minister with a personal interest in homosexuality. An ordained Baptist preacher, Perry was married and the father of two children before he discovered his real sexual preference. But he prefers God above all, and his church is orchestrated with the kind of evangelistic fervor Pentecostalism has always offered uneasy souls.

Prohibitions: Although some religious historians have alleged that Jesus himself was a homosexual, Perry does not agree with them. "But had Jesus lived in this age," the 30-year-old pastor argues, "he at least would have been labeled a homosexual. After all, he never married, ran around with twelve guys and was even betrayed by a kiss from another guy." In any case, Perry emphasizes that the majority of homosexuals feel that Jesus was not "anti-homosexual"—and that seems to be enough for them. Despite Biblical prohibitions against homosexual love, most religious homosexuals believe that Christ died for the sins of all men. "As far as Christ is concerned," Perry concludes, "love in any form is permissible."

*California law recognizes all marriages between partners who can show a certificate from an ordained minister proving that their marriage has been solemnized in a church ceremony. This law does not stipulate that the partners must be a man and a woman, only a "husband" and a "wife."

FINALLY—MCC'S OWN HOME

MCC Los Angeles buys building — if city okays

Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles, which has held services in a movie theatre for most of its existence, purchased its own building on Oct. 13, a week after its second anniversary.

The purchase is contingent on a city occupancy permit. MCC pastor Rev. Troy Perry said he expected the permit to be granted.

The building, which seats 600 in the auditorium, is at 22nd and Hoover near the University of Southern California campus and on the fringes of downtown Los Angeles.

Purchase price was $55,000. The church expects to spend another $20,000 for repairs and immediately launched an all-out fund drive to raise this amount.

"It's an old building," said Rev. Perry, "and right now it looks terrible, but after we get through with it, we expect to have a building we can be proud of."

The church does not expect to occupy the building before Christmas.

"We'll give it to ourselves as a Christmas present," said Perry.

He said the $20,000 would be used for exterior work on the building, with church members pitching in to spruce up the inside.

The MCC's present office and classroom building, once occupied by Rev. Perry and his family and still called the Parsonage, will be given up when the new building is ready, he said.

Perry said the church had hoped to find larger quarters. It negotiated for a large downtown building several months ago which would have seated over 1000, but couldn't get together with the owners on the price.

MCC's current membership is 420, but its Sunday services have been drawing 500 or more.

"This means we may soon have to go to two services a day," said Perry.

But he said MCC could not continue to presume on the generosity of Louis Federici, owner of the Encore Theatre where the church now meets. Federici has been providing the theatre without charge.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

Worship Service Directory

GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
P. O. BOX 285
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

DALLAS MISSION
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
P. O. BOX 5944
DALLAS, TEXAS 75222

HAWAIIN MISSION
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
P. O. BOX 1116
KANOEHO, HAWAII 96744

MIAMI MISSION
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
180 S. W. 9TH ST., APT. #7
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33130

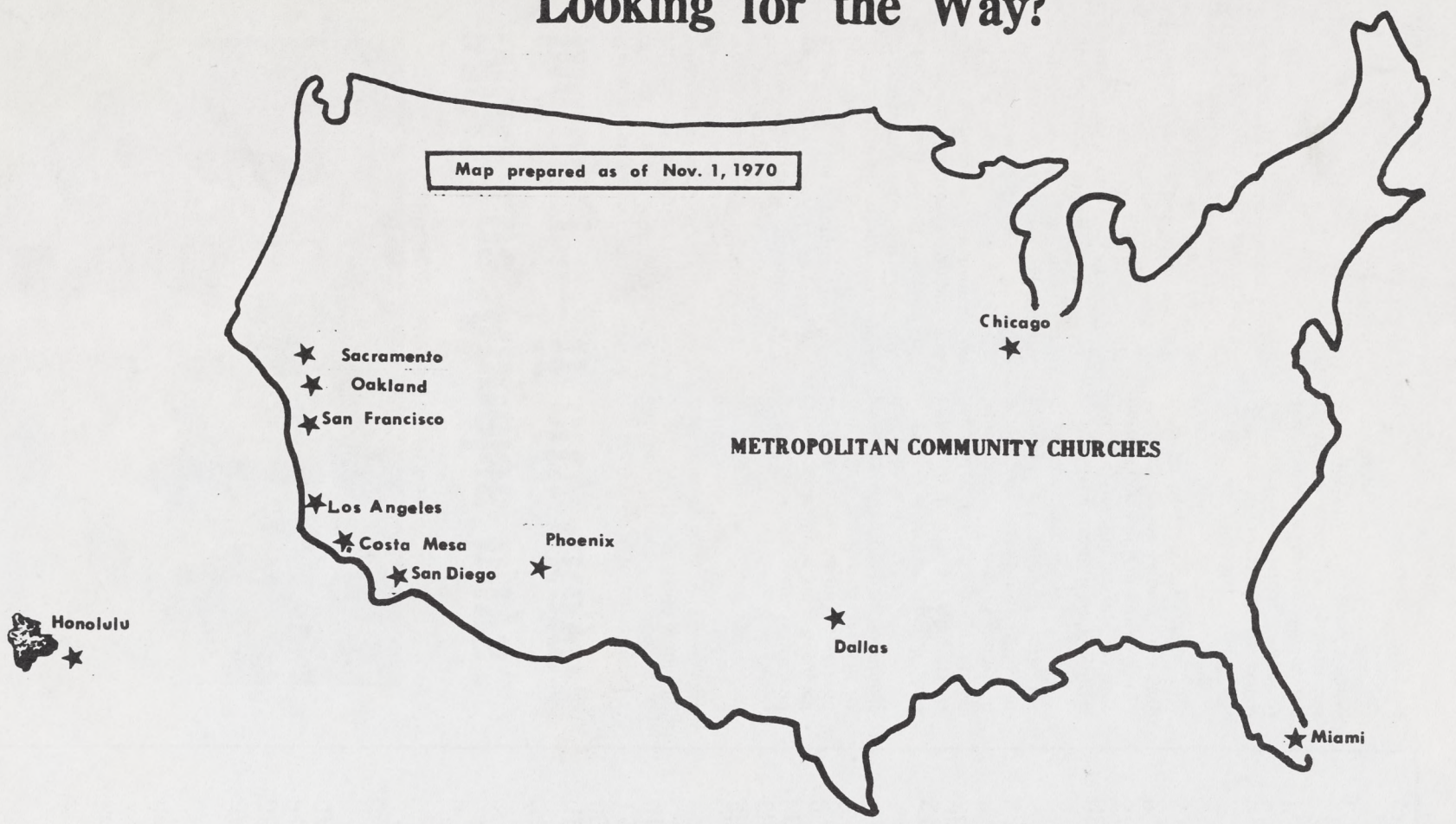
PHOENIX MISSION
CHAPEL OF THE NOMADS
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
P. O. BOX 2357
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85002

SAN DIEGO
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
P. O. BOX 8205
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
SAN FRANCISCO
P.O. BOX 99369
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94114

COSTA MESA MISSION
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
2232 A PACIFIC AVE.,
COSTA MESA, CA.

Looking for the Way?



Metropolitan Community Church began in late 1968 when a small group of Christian homophiles met in Los Angeles at the home of the Rev. Troy D. Perry. Today that church has over 500 persons in attendance every Sunday, plus boasts a full range of activities and social services for its members and for active friends

Metropolitan Community Church, which is made up of persons from every type of religious background, opens its doors to and serves all people. But, its special outreach is to the men and women of the homophile community. They are God's children and they deserve to have a church home, where they may worship Him and be reassured of His love and His concern for them.

Love God? Join Us Today!